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A NEW CLIMAX IN THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS IN CENTRAL AND EAST AFRICA

By Hsiao Chiao

COMMUNIST CHINESE ATTITUDE

THE NEW FIRE

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A NEW CLIMAX IN THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE
MOVEMENTS IN CENTRAL AND EAST AFRICA

[Following is the translation of an article by Hsiao Chiao
in Kuang-ming Jih-pao, 8 August 1960, Peiping, page 4]

Following the recent development of the anti-imperialism, anti-aggression patriotic struggle by the Congo people, colonies in central and east Africa such as Rhodesia, Kenya, Angola, Ruanda-Urundi, etc., have created a new climax in their anti-colonial-rule struggle. The last stronghold of imperialism in Africa is tottering and on the verge of complete disintegration.

Since the outbreak of the Congo incident, the imperialist countries, with America as their leader, anticipating a chain reaction in other parts of Africa, lost no time in the planning of military intervention. Suppression was strengthened in all the neighboring colonies around Congo. The British controlled Federation of Central Africa Colonial Office dispatched a sizable army to the border of Congo and North Rhodesia long before Congo declared its independence. This was, no doubt, a preventive measure to suppress the possible high climax in national independence movements as a result of the success in Congo. After Belgium initiated armed intervention in Congo, authorities in Rhodesia requested military assistance from the home office. Great Britain's colonial office recommended the reinforcement of their troops in Kenya. The Secretary of Defence admitted that such steps were necessary because "the general prevailing conditions in that area called for preventive measures". After Portugal proclaimed martial law in her colony Angola, she further sent out her fleet in the Atlantic Ocean for "observations". No matter how complicated and confusing the suppressive measures are, the people of colonial areas have broken through the suppression of imperialism. The natives have further ignited the angry flame of struggle for independence and freedom.

From the middle of July, in Salisbury, the capital of South Rhodesia, widespread strikes broke out. This was an indication that the struggle against anti-colonial rule had erupted in full force. The strikes were in protest of the arrest of the Leaders of South Rhodesia National Democratic Party. During the demonstrations, the working masses and the colonial police clashed head-on in a bitter struggle. Even small children joined in the struggle by throwing

rocks at their colonial rulers. This righteous action received the enthusiastic support of all the people of South Rhodesia. On July 24, another mass strike and demonstration broke out in Bulawayo, the center of commerce and industry in South Rhodesia. This was another protest against the brutal means of suppression and the British colonial rule in general.

Not too long ago, there was another mass demonstration by the workers in Nyasaland to protest the arrest of labor strike leaders. In North Rhodesia, the movement to collect signatures in favor of seceding from the "Federation of Central Africa" is spreading and already three hundred and forty thousand signatures have been counted. This so-called "Federation" was put together by imperialists and it has recently become more and more unpopular with the native Africans. According to the latest information, the bloody riots of 1952 in Kenya which shook the very roots of imperialism, but was so brutally crushed by the British imperialists, will be repeated very soon. The British Colonial Office has already dispatched an army battalion named the "Fire Fighters" by air to Kenya. But the history of the peoples' struggle in Kenya has proved without a doubt that the fire of Africans opposing the imperialists' exploitation and suppression can never be extinguished. On the contrary, imperialism will perish in this most fervent fire. The Portuguese colony, known to be under the most severe colonial blockade, has been swept into this rising tide of the national independence struggle. Recently, there were numerous riots and demands for political rights. Since the outbreak of large-scale anti-colonial rule, armed riots in Congo and Nyasaland, the Portuguese authorities ordered the strengthening of border blockades. Reinforcements were brought in from the Portuguese mainland, yet the natives persist in armed resistance in the northern and southern sections of Angola. Cries of independence were heard also in Ruanda-Urundi, a protectorate of Belgium. All the political parties in Urundi agreed unanimously to demand independence in December this year.

This new climax in independence movements throughout Central and East Africa reflects that the African national independence movement is encompassing a wider scope while developing more profoundly. The total collapse of colonial rule in Africa is drawing nearer by the day. Central Africa and East Africa are the last two outposts of imperialism in Africa. They were once looked upon as the fortresses of colonial rule. These two sections are different from West Africa in the respect that in Kenya and Rhodesia, there is a comparatively large section of European settlers. The capitalist class settlers and the colonial authorities, closely knit by their common interests, make up the pillar of colonial rule. Imperialism has been utilizing their advantageous positions, both from the military and economic points of view. Not only is Kenya the "key port" of the British overseas life line, it is also an important military base for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. In March this year, the British Defense Minister openly declared during his inspection of Nairobi: This British military base in Kenya will be opened for the use of all countries belonging to the North

Atlantic Treaty Organization, including West Germany. Naturally, the first target of aggression will be areas in Asia and Africa where the tide of the national independence movement is running high. In 1958, Britain transferred part of her forces from Kenya to Libya, attempting to intervene in the domestic revolution in Iraq. At the beginning of this year, the imperialist countries, with America as their leader, planned to build a new military base in Rhodesia. This is evidence that imperialism will never, of its free will, abandon its colonies in Africa. On the contrary, the imperialists are using force to suppress the rising tide of national independence movements. By monopolizing the capital, America and Britain are in complete control of the rich natural resources in central and east Africa. Rhodesia is the second largest producer of copper in the capitalist world. The control of copper production in central Africa by America rose from one quarter as shareholders before the world war up to the present equal basis with Britain. According to estimates, from the day the imperialists started their operations up to 1958, the value of various mining products being plundered would be around one hundred and sixty thousand British pounds. The commission of foreign companies in 1957 alone amounted to eleven thousand British pounds. The colonial rulers seized the most fertile lands and operated big farms. The African natives were compelled to give up their lands and settle in limited reservations. Not only did the central and east Africans suffer heavy economical exploitations by the imperialists, they were brutally subjected to inhuman political oppression and racial prejudice. The Africans were stripped of all political rights. Even the most basic right to live was jeopardized. In Kenya, the right to organize national political parties was banned, neither do the natives have the right to gather and meet. In Rhodesia and Nyasaland, for the convenience of plundering the local natural resources, the exploitation of native manpower and the suppression of national independence movements, British imperialists organized "The Federation of Central Africa".

Because of the uncompromising conflict in east and central Africa between imperialism and the colonists, the imperialists have always ruled with an iron hand. The native Africans have entered into a long term heroic revolutionary struggle. In 1952, the patriotic movement of the "Mau-Mau" in Kenya raised the flag of armed struggle over Africa for the first time. The "anti-Central Africa Federation" struggles in Rhodesia and Nyasaland came in waves, with one wave rising higher than the other. In February 1959, the armed riots in Nyasaland were in direct protest against the "Central Africa Federation". Following closely on the heels of the righteous struggle in Kenya, it dealt a serious blow to British imperialism. Through the education of blood and the training in struggle, the natives of central and east Africa have become all the more conscious of the meaning of freedom and democracy. The role of the working people in the struggle became more important. From the events that happened in the recent year or so, such as the big strike of 6,000 construction workers in South

Rhodesia back in February, the strike of 24,000 railroad workers in Kenya last November, the prolonged and still unsettled strike of the railroad workers in Uranda and Tangayika beginning the last part of 1959, the strike of the farm workers, and the recent political strikes of the workers in South Rhodesia and Nyasaland, it is quite evident that the working class is a strong force in the national independence movements. The national independence movements in central and east Africa are increasingly becoming a movement of the masses.

It is now quite evident that the national independence movements on the entire African continent cannot be checked. Imperialism retreated gradually from North Africa and West Africa, and now it attempts to make a last stand in central and east Africa. The colonial rulers, aside from strengthening their forces in armed suppression in these areas, have supplemented their tactics with plots of political deceit, just as they have done elsewhere. British imperialists suggested the so-called "constitutional changes" to Kenya, Uganda, Tangayika, Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Such "changes" included as bait the "broadening" of the right to vote, parliamentary seats, cabinet posts, or even premierships to attract certain nationalists to create an illusion of "parliamentary democracy" so as to solve all problems of national independence. The real goal is to utilize such intrigues to drive a wedge between the people and paralyze their will to struggle. Thus, they will be able to retain all their privileges and profits. American imperialism is working feverishly on these intrigues in order to infiltrate central and east Africa. The American capitalistic monopolists, backed by 10 million America dollars from a leading Manhattan bank, increased their pillage of mining resources in Rhodesia. The most disgusting thing of all is that American imperialism, through the activities of the Union sponsored by her, is trying desperately to control the other Unions in central and east Africa. At the same time, through some "educational" plans devised by the State Department, a friendly American force is being organized in Africa. But all these deceitful plans of imperialism will no doubt be recognized by the Africans for what they are. The people of Africa will not stand together with imperialism. They will not be deceived. The Congo incident is a good example. The imperialist countries, with America as their leader, should not entertain any fancy illusions. The people of Africa must gain their own independence and democracy through a strong will to fight. The people of central and east Africa have arisen to carry on the struggle with imperialism, and the Africans will achieve victory. The tidal wave of anti-imperialism in Africa will undoubtedly engulf this last fortress of imperialism in this area. No force on earth can either turn aside or check this tide.